

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
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INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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TAGS: PEPR, USUN, EG, IS, LE, IT, VE  
SUBJECT: PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION: MONSIGNOR  
CAPUCCI SPEAKS ON POSSIBLE RELATIONS BETWEEN  
PLO AND GOV; PLO DEPUTY REP TO UN ALSO VISITS  
CARACAS

1. MONSIGNOR HILARION CAPUCCI, THE BISHOP OF JERUSALEM  
IMPRISONED SEVERAL YEARS AGO BY ISRAEL FOR GUN SMUGGLING,  
GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN CARACAS MARCH 8. MONSIGNOR  
CAPUCCI HAS BEEN IN CARACAS SINCE JANUARY, OSTENSIBLY  
SENT BY THE VATICAN TO VISIT 50,000 GREEK CATHOLICS  
LIVING IN VENEZUELA, MEXICO, ARGENTIA AND COLOMBIA.

2. IN PRESS STATEMENTS, MONSIGNOR CAPUCCI SAID THAT  
PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ HAD PROMISED TO CONSIDER  
ESTABLISHING FORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION  
ORGANIZATION, NOTING THAT AS THE ONLY GENUINE REPRESENTA-  
TIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, THE PLO WOULD OPEN A  
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DIPLOMATIC OFFICE IN CARACAS IF PRESIDENT PEREZ EXTENDED  
OFFICIAL RECOGNITION. ON THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT,  
MONSIGNOR CAPUCCI SAID THAT AS LONG AS THE USG GAVE  
ANY SUPPORT TO ISRAEL IN ANY WAY, "THE U.S. WAS AS  
MORALLY GUILTY AS ISRAEL OF BEING AN AGGRESSOR AND  
EXPLOITER OF THE PALESTINIAN ARABAS." FURTHER, HE SAID  
THAT THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT COULD BE SOLVED IN LARGE

PART IF ISRAELIS LIVING IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY WOULD LIVE AS EQUALS WITH PALESTINIAN ARABAS.

3. HE NOTED THAT HE DID NOT DISAPPROVE OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S PERSONAL DIMPLAMCY WITH ISRAEL, BUT CRITICIZED HIM FOR LACK OF CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. ON LEBANON, MONSIGNOR CAPUCCI WAS LESS CLEAR IN HIS STATEMENTS ABOUT LEBANON AND ITS RELATIONSHWIP WITH PALESTINE, SAYING "PALESTINE AND LEBANON ARE ONE BODY LIKE TWIN BROTHERS," BUT ADDING LATER, "THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IS THE ONLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THAT NATION".

4. HASSAN RAHMAN, INFORMATION DIRECTOR OF THE PLO IN NEW YORK AND DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLO TO THE UN, ARRIVED IN CARACAS FOR SEVERAL WEEKS TO "MAKE POLITICAL CONTACTS FOR THE ORGANIZATION" ACCORDING OT LOCAL PRESS. IN PRESS STATEMENTS, HE INSISTED THAT THE PLO IS THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FOUR MILLION PALESTINIANS IN THE WORLD." HE ALSO CRITICIZED SADAT'S RECENT PEACE INITIATIVE BECAUSE "IT IS NOT BEING UNDERTAKEN WITH ARAB CONSENSUS ON PALESTINE, AND IT EXCLUDES THE PLO." HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT SADAT'S EFFORTS ARE ESSENTIALLY DIVISIVE AND DOOMED TO FAILURE BECAUSE OF "ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE." RAHMAN NOTED THAT PALESTINIANS HAD MADE TWO DEFINITE PROPOSALS FOR PEACE: (1) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "DEMONCRATICE SECULAR STATE"; (2) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP. BOTH, HE SAID HAD BEEN REJECTED BY ISRAEL.

5. COMMENT: DURING HIS RESIDENCE IN CARACAS, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME MONSIGNOR CAPUCCI HAS PUBLICLY SPOKEN FORTH AT LENGTH ON THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT AND THE PLO. ON MARCH 7 MAJOR CARAKAS DAILIES CARRIED FULL-PAGE OF PHOTO OF CAPUCCI AND CAPTION FROM ARAB COMMUNITY THANKING POPE PAUL VI FOR THE VISIT OF MONSIGNOR CAPUCCI ANDDESCRIBING CAPUCCI AS "BISHOP OF JERUSALEM IN EXILE, LOYAL SON OF PALESTINE, DEFENDER OF LEBANESE INTEGRITY, LEADER OF ARAB UNITY AND PEACE." THE METROPOLITAN CARACAS AREAS HAS AN ARAB IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY OF ABOUT 75,000. IN ADDITION, A VENEZUELAN CITIZEN OF ARAB EXTRACTION SERVES AS THE UNOFFICIAL PLO LIASISON CHIEF FOR LATIN AMERICAN, HOWEVER, HIS ACTIVITIES IN VENEZUELA HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY LIMITED. SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE BY THE ARAB COMMUNITY IN VENEZUELA HAS ALSO BEEN LOW KEYED. ALTHOUGH THE GOV HAS HAD AGOOD DEAL OF PRESSURE FROM ITS ARAB OPEC PARTNERS TO PERMIT ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICIAL PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN CARACAS, EMBASSY HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE

THAT PEREZ WILL DO SO. DESPITE PRESSURE FROM OPEC COUNTRIES,  
GOV FEARS CONSEQUENCE OF STRAINED RELATIONS WITH OTHER  
COUNTRIES AND THE THREAT OF PLO TERRORISM EVEN MORE.

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